

# IMPACT OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD ON CHRISTIANS; A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS (NIFES), UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE MAKURDI

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**Abstract:** This research work is geared at attempting to point out the impact of inductive bible study on Christians using NIFES group in University of Agriculture as a typical case study, this work was done with the use of questionnaires, primary data was collected from the field, analysed, interpreted and discussed in the content of this work. The total number of questionnaire received were 128. The data was received from Nigeria fellowship of evangelical students (NIFES) University of Agriculture Makurdi. The result shows that at least 58% of the students study their bibles at least once in a day, 37% twice or more a day and 5% do not study at all. At least 44% verify what they hear from bible discussions, about 34% have never heard of inductive Bible study, about 30% of those who had heard before heard in NIFES weekly fellowship meetings, 27% heard from special programmes organised by NIFES and 9% heard from their local churches. According to the results, 65% study their Bibles inductively, 87% affirmed they get inspiration from Inductive Bible study while 83% showed they had inspiration for righteousness, 80% said Inductive bible study has played important roles in their lives, 82% are very satisfied with this method of study, 80% accepts this method answers many doubting questions in their minds, 82% have spiritual benefits of the study and about 81% have had their faith increased as a result of inductive Bible studies. It was concluded that Inductive Bible study has a highly positive impact on the students and is as well a successful tool in improving the efficacy of Christian Living.

**Key Words:** Impact, Inductive Bible Study (IBS), Christians, NIFES.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The knowledge of the bible enriches incredibly the soul of man. This is a very important aspect of the Christian faith that cannot and should not at any time be trivialized. The bible is without doubt an incredible book that is not only geared towards reformation but as well the transformation of a whole being and nature of man. The bible transforms the minds of men to become everlasting elements of praise to God who is the Grand weaver of the entire universe.

### 1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Ron Smith in his book titled introduction to Inductive Bible study said “Less than 10% of the Church worldwide have read the entire bible”. Because the reading of the bible is a big issue to Christians and many only open or study their bibles mostly on Sundays when it is time to go to church or perform a function that is somewhat religious. This study is geared at laying emphasis on the study of the bible in order to obtain a reasonable depth by self-study of the scriptures and not relying on researchers or preachers for revelations and understanding what the bible says.

### 1.2 THE INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE APPROACHES TO BIBLE STUDY:

It is of worth to know that there are different types or approaches to the study of the bible, however of much interest in this work is the inductive approach, there are two fundamental approaches mentioned here with contrast to both deductive method of the study of the bible and inductive method or approach to the study of the bible.

While inductive bible study helps the reader to draw conclusions from what he or she has read, observed and laying aside preconceived thoughts or ideas, deductive approach has a preconceived idea or thoughts and would rather want to get information or scriptural back up whether good or bad to support such ideas and thoughts.

Inductive bible study approach attempts to let scriptures speak for its self with the principle of Scripture interprets scripture, deductive approach attempts to dictate for scriptures thus making room for lots of assumptions. Inductive bible study approach permits the study of the bible in context, thus giving a vivid definition, analysis, reasoning and complete dependability on the scriptural context of information as against the study of bible deductively when one draws conclusions which may be erroneous before attempting to get to the context of the text in question.

Since most of the study of the bible today seem more to be deductive, it is advisable that an inductive approach should be given due consideration for a better, deeper and more convincing facts to be followed.

Inductive Bible study is an approach to God's Word focusing on three basic steps that move from a general overview to specifics. Through these three steps, we apply inductive reasoning, which is defined as the attempt to use information about a specific situation to draw a conclusion.

### **1.3 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY:**

#### **1. OBSERVATION**

According to (Elizabeth Mark, 2010) "At the observation stage, important background information or facts that comes mostly in form of questions such as who, what, where and why? "

These questions drive down to attempt to have answers in the same text which is why contextualization is an important element in the study of the bible inductively.

At the observation stage, the background check or questions helps the reader to try to understand some basic information, it helps the reader to get the context of the information passed by the author, at what time in history did the author write? The audience that was targeted by the author, what motivated the piece of write up? And why did the author have to write?

#### **2. INTERPRETATION**

This phase tries to let us know the true meaning of what is intended by the author with the information that might have been gathered in the questions from the previous stage with regards to the context of use.

In this stage as well much attention is paid to what the author meant by the choice of words he used and then depend on the Holy Spirit to help interpret the scripture even as we get understanding by reading through.

It is not advisable at this point to jump into conclusion as many do, it takes meticulous study, perusing word for word, sentence by sentence, honesty, objectivity to attempt to interpret the actual situation.

With the study of the bible inductively, especially at the stage of interpretation, proper care needs to be taken. One translation of the bible may not be very sufficient, the Bible dictionary and English dictionary as well as maps are important tools and depending on the testament book or chapter under study, knowledge may be sought from both Greek and Hebrew languages to accurately interpret in the context that is applicable.

The dictionary plays an important role, people quite often think when they get in contact with familiar words, and it may just be what they take the meaning to be in all situations, however, it is not always so, thus, the use of a good dictionary is imperative for the study of the bible inductively and trying to interpret correctly.

#### **3. APPLICATION**

The third important step in the study of the bible inductively is the application of what had been read, observed and interpreted appropriately. This is an attempt to try to relate those realities to the present day situation. It basically deals with what does all that was observed and interpreted mean to an individual? Does it have any direct correlation with the present day situation or environment? How can it be properly executed in the present day? And many more.

**2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The data used in the entirety of this work are entirely true and accurately compiled from the field as primary source and not secondary source, in order to buttress the impact of Inductive Bible study and really get to know how effective it has been over the years in the lives of Christians, questionnaire was prepared and shared amongst students of Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students(NIFES), Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi Zone. The data was collected, analysed, interpreted and made in such a simple representation for understanding.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

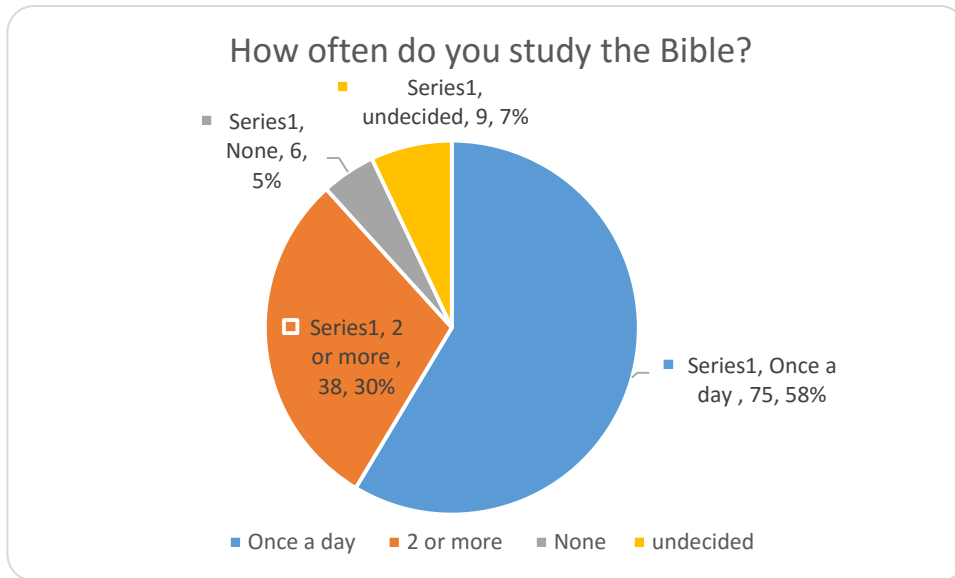


Fig. 3.1. How often students study the Bible.

From the result obtained as shown in Fig.3.1, it shows that 58% of students study their Bibles daily, while about 30% study their bibles twice or more,5% do not study at all and about 7% gave indecisive results.

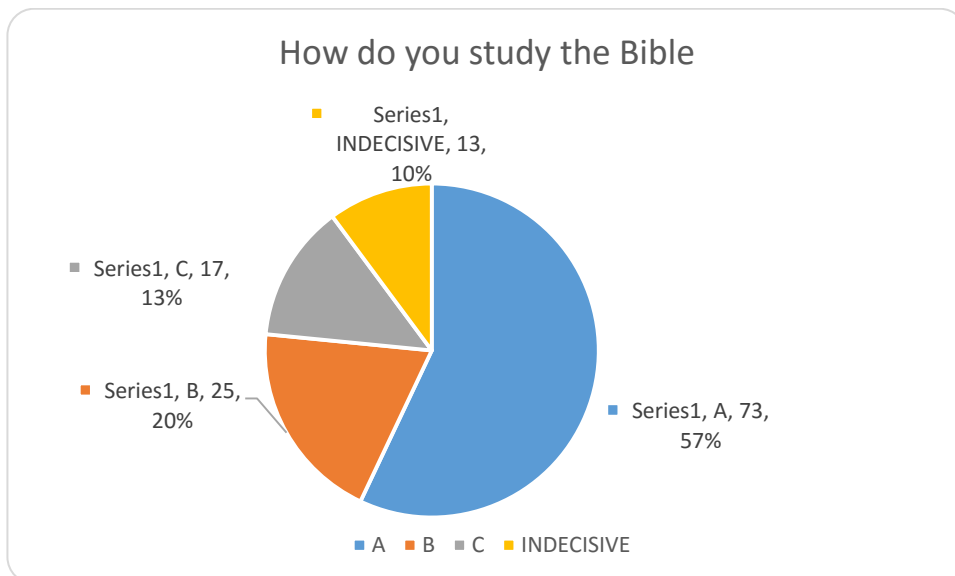


Fig.3.2 shows how students study their bibles. From the research questions

A= Read and understand each verse at a time

B= Read and understand an entire group of verses at a time

C= Read and understand a chapter or group of chapters at a time

Indecisive here means either those who do not practice at all or did not get the question clearly.

However, about 57% reads and understands each verse of the Bible at a time, 20% reads and understands an entire group of verses at a time while 13% reads and understands a chapter or group of chapters at a time and 10% were indecisive with this question which could be considered they do not practice or did not understand the question put to them.

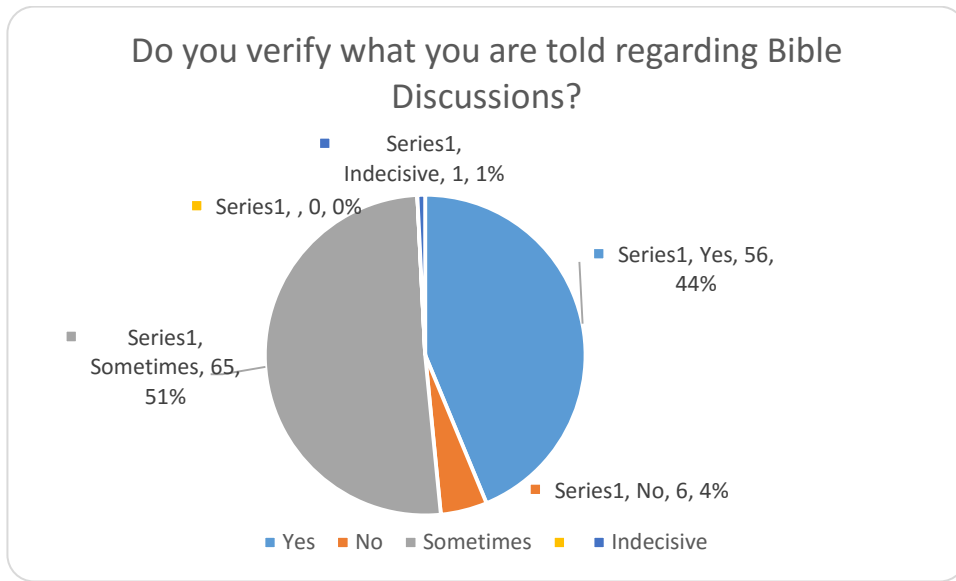


Fig 3.3 shows the result of how many students verify what you are told regarding Bible discussions.

It shows that about 44% verify what they hear or discuss in bible discussions, 4 % do not verify at all, while 51% verify sometimes but not at all times and just 1% was indecisive about this.

Paul in the gospels commended the bearean Christians thus “These were nobler than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” It is thus important to verify the scripture when discussed because things are either said out of context and people are made to believe such, some are even entirely out of the scripture but due to the levity on the side of Christians who are not conversant with scriptures and as well hold it firm as the infallible words of the lord gets confused and this leads to wrong application of same, which is dangerous.

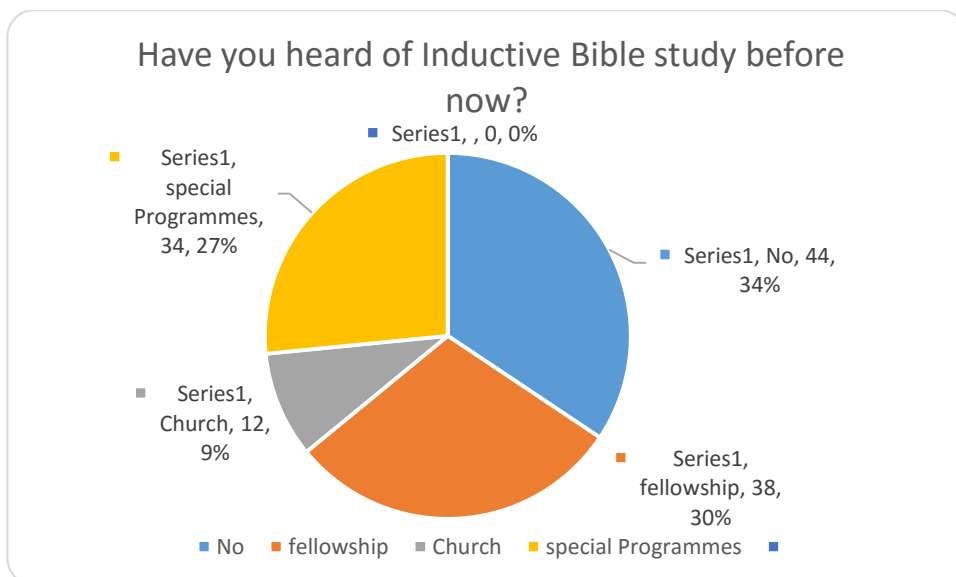


Fig 3.4 shows results for how many people have heard of Inductive Bible Study before questionnaires were sent to them.

About 34% had never heard of Inductive Bible studies (IBS), while the remaining 64% had heard, 30% of them heard from school fellowships like Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES), about 9% heard from

their local churches, and 27% heard from special fellowships such as those organised by Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES) like Leadership Training Programmes (LTP), Leadership Training Conferences (LTC), National Mission Conferences (NMC) etc.

It can be seen that most local churches do not teach the bible contextually, or inductively but rather deductively as only 9% knew about Inductive Bible Study (IBS).

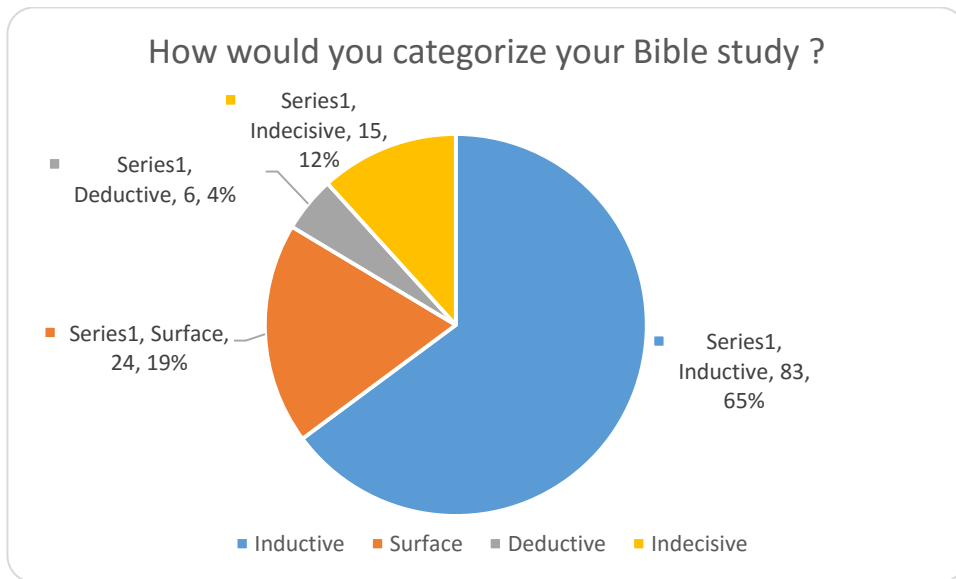


Fig.3.5 shows the types of Bible studies embarked on by students interviewed.

From the Pie chart, it can be seen that about 65% study the Bible inductively, this seem to be quite impressive but as well, more can yet be achieved by having more people study the bible inductively as it gives in more details and contextual comprehension of the scriptures, About 19% percent study the bible through just reading without going deeper or digging deep, this is no doubt a serious challenge with Christendom today, as failure to dig deep into the scriptures leads to shallow Christians who do not grow unto maturity in the life of Christ. It shows that 4% study deductively while 12% were indecisive.

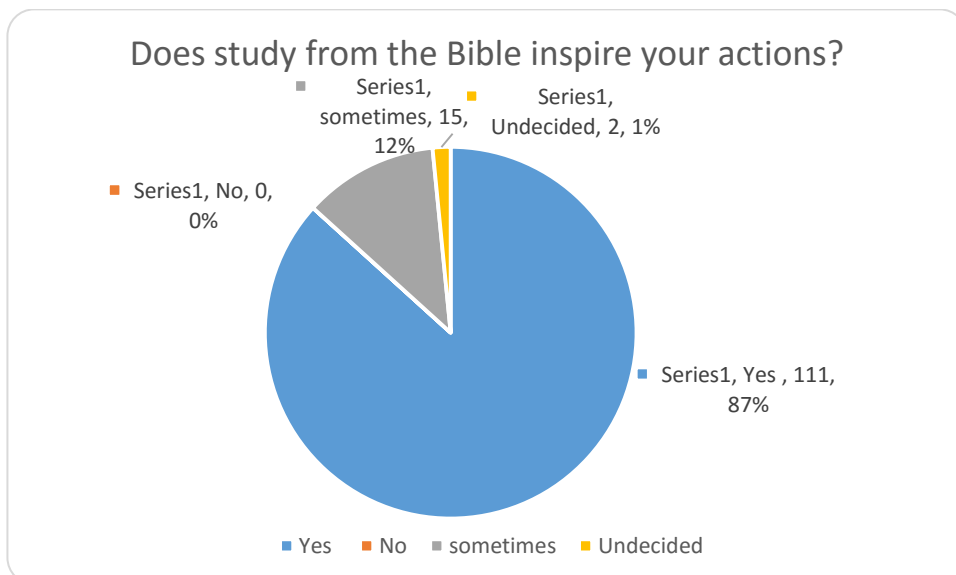


Fig. 3.6 shows the results from the question if the bible inspire the actions of students and about 87% affirmed they have their actions inspired from the Holy Scriptures while 12% said they are sometimes inspired by the scriptures but not always, just sometimes. The remaining 1% was undecided whether it does or not.

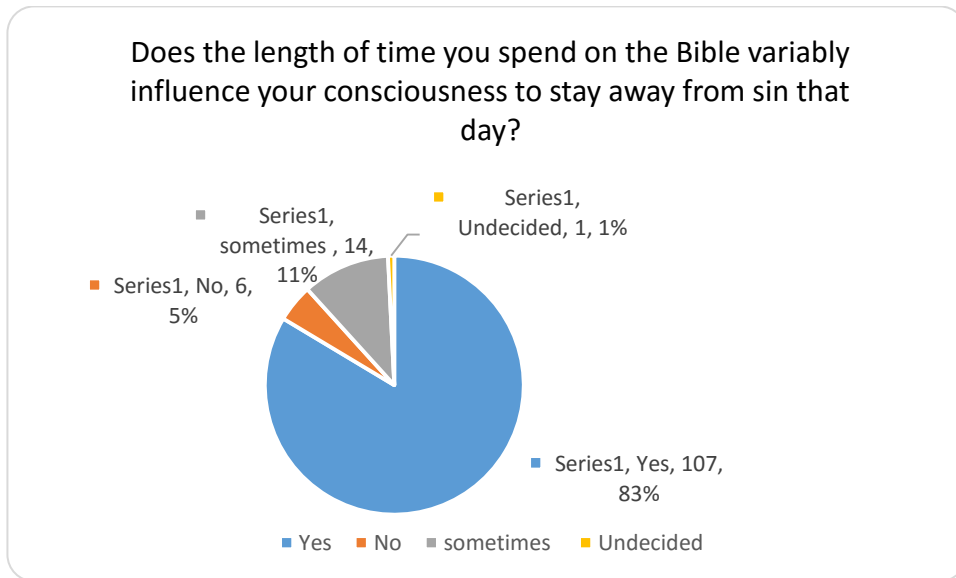


Fig 3.7 shows the results obtained from the question, does the length of time you spend on the Bible variably influence your consciousness to stay away from sin that day?

While about 83 % confirmed the more they stayed in the study of the Bible, the more they have the consciousness of staying away from sin, 5% said no matter how long they stayed in the study of the Bible, the consciousness to stay away from sin for that day is not available, despite the time involved no matter how long, they still fall prey of sin. 11% confirmed they are sometimes conscious of sin the more they stay in the study of the scriptures and sometimes not. The remaining 1% remained in the undecided category.

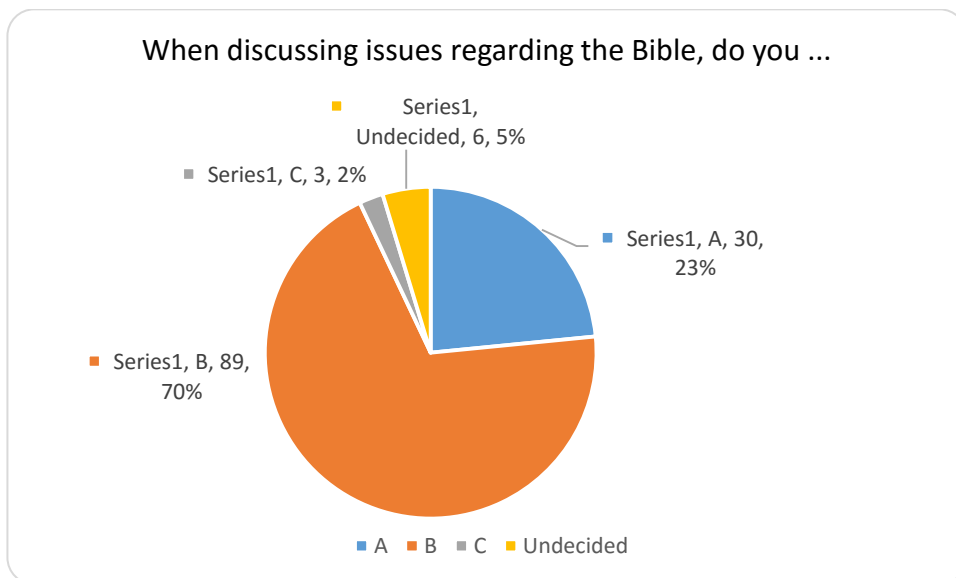


Fig.3.8 shows the result obtained from the question. When discussing issues regarding the Bible, do you

- a. Argue things out
- b. Make your points from scripture
- c. Just ignore and let the particular matter die without knowing the correct side.

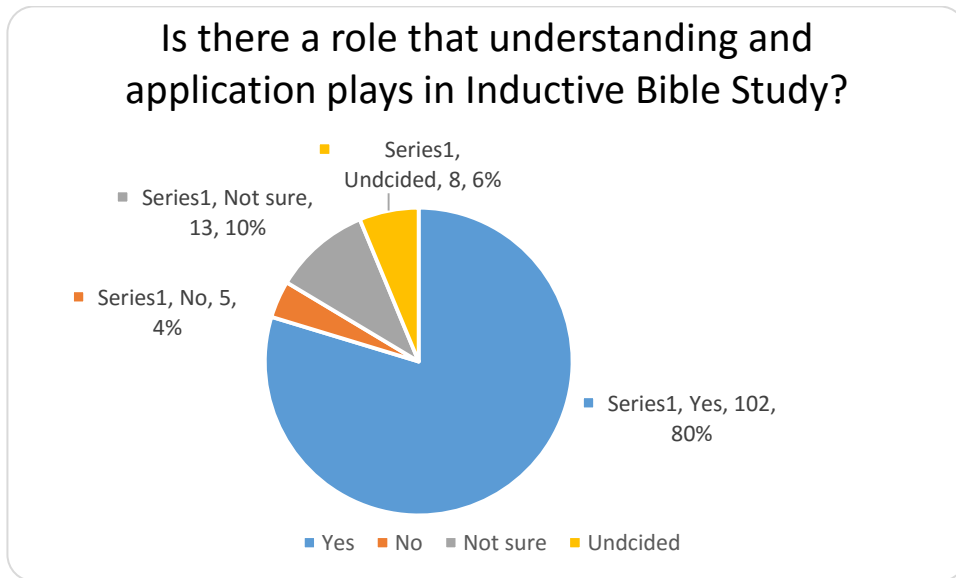
From the pie chart

A= Argue things out

B=. Make your points from scripture

C= Just ignore and let the particular matter die without knowing the correct side.

It was found that about 23% argue out things in the scripture with the scripture, 70 % argue out things, about 2% just ignore and let the particular matter fade awya without knowing the correct side and 5% was undecided about the matter.



To the question, is there a role that understanding and application plays in Inductive Bible Study?

Fig.3.9 shows results obtained, 80% accepted they believed that there is a role in the understanding and applicability of what is studied from the scriptures, 4% did not think there is a role that understanding and application plays important roles in Inductive Bible study (IBS), 10% were not sure while the remaining 6% were undecided.

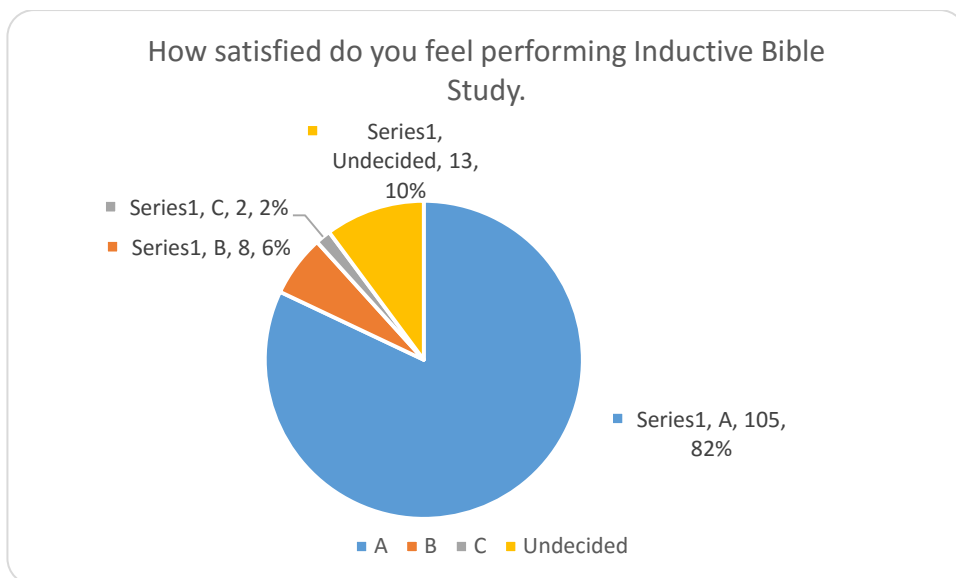


Fig.3.10 shows results from the question, how satisfied do you feel when performing Inductive Bible Study?

- a. Satisfied and happy
- b. Normal and unaffected
- c. Dissatisfied and confused

In the Pie Chart above, A= Satisfied and happy

B= Normal and unaffected

C=. Dissatisfied and confused

From the results obtained, 82% feel Satisfied and Happy, 6% feel it is just normal and as well feel unaffected,10% feel dissatisfied while the remaining 10% had undecided results.

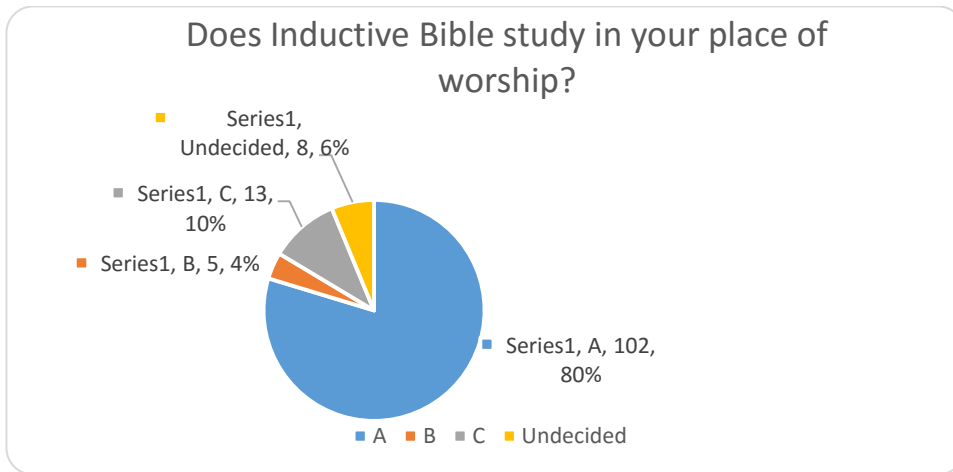


Fig.3.11 shows results obtained from the question does Inductive Bible study in your place of worship?

- a. Answer life questions you have
- b. Feel like every other Bible study
- c. Make things confusing and complicated

As seen above, about 80% feel inductive bible studies (IBS) answers life questions they have, 4% feel like Inductive Bible study is like every other Bible study, 10% felt Inductive Bible study (IBS) makes things confusing and complicated.

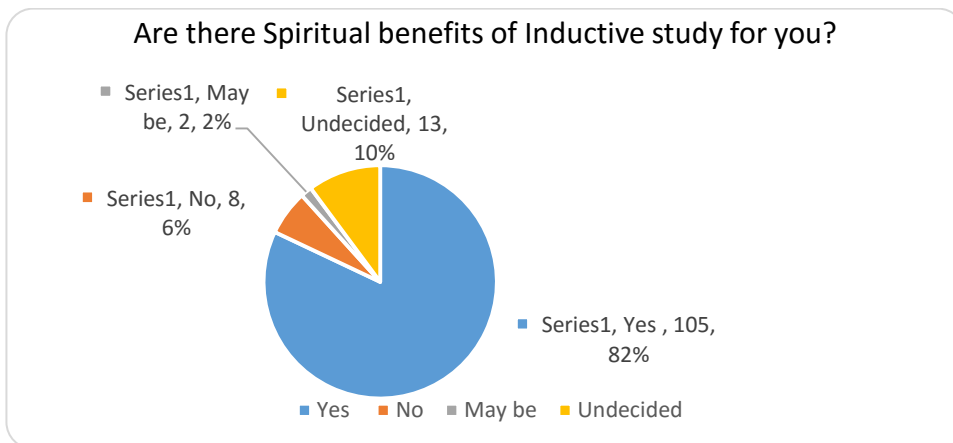


Fig.3.12 shows obtained results from the questionnaires sent, and on the question if there are Spiritual benefits of Inductive study or not. About 82% affirmed they derive a lot of spiritual benefits from Inductive Bible studies (IBS), 6% felt Inductive Bible study (IBS) has no spiritual benefits. 2% felt were not very sure of if Inductive Bible study has spiritual blessings or benefits to them. 10 % were undecided on this.

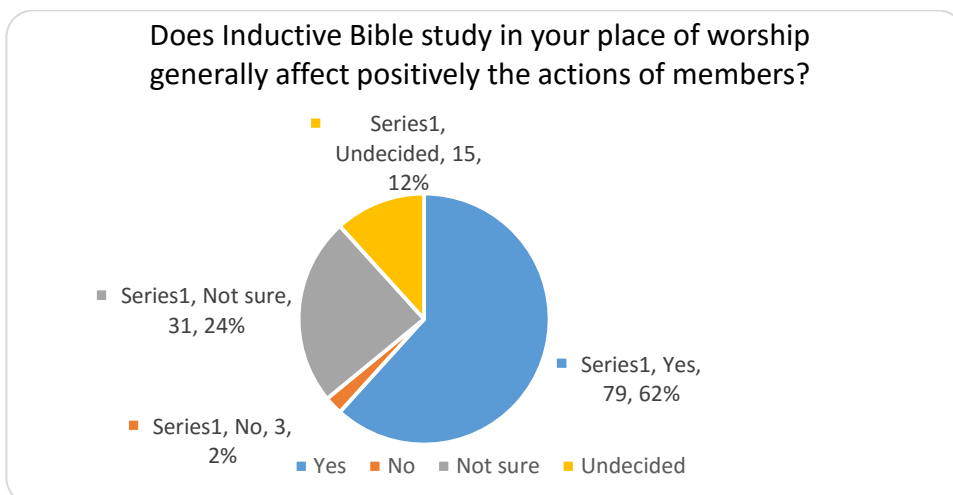




Fig 3.13 shows the result of the question does Inductive Bible study in your place of worship generally affect positively the actions of members?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe

From the Pie Chart A = Yes, B= No, C= May be (Not sure)

About 62% noticed Inductive Bible Studies have impacted positively the people in their worship centres, churches etc., about 2 % did not notice or see any positive influence in the lives of the members, 24% were not sure and 12% were undecided about this.

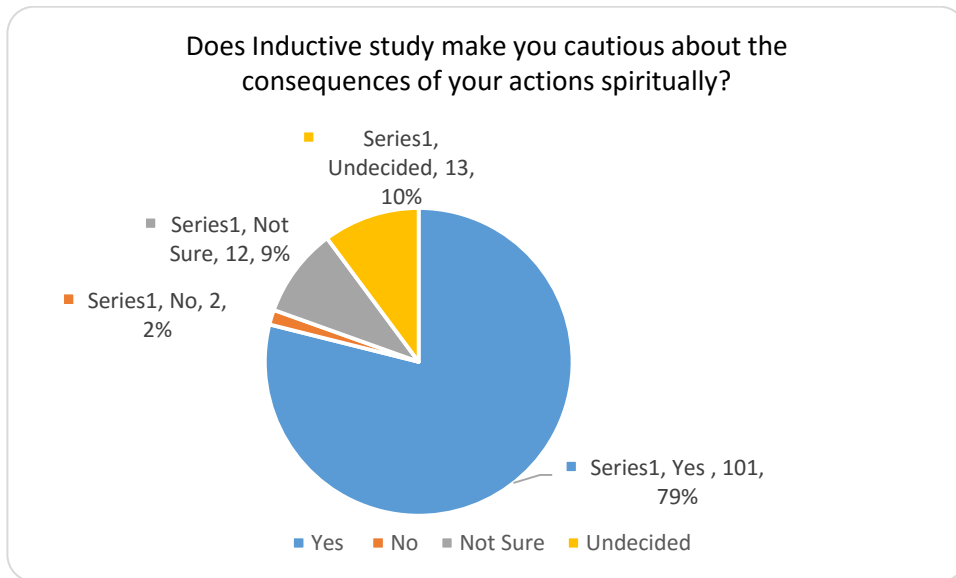


Fig.3.14 The pie chart shows the results for the question does Inductive study make you cautious about the consequences of your actions spiritually?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

About 79% said Inductive Bible Studies (IBS) makes them cautious of sin, about 2% said inductive Bible studies do not makes them cautious of consequences of their actions, 9% were not sure while 10% were undecided.

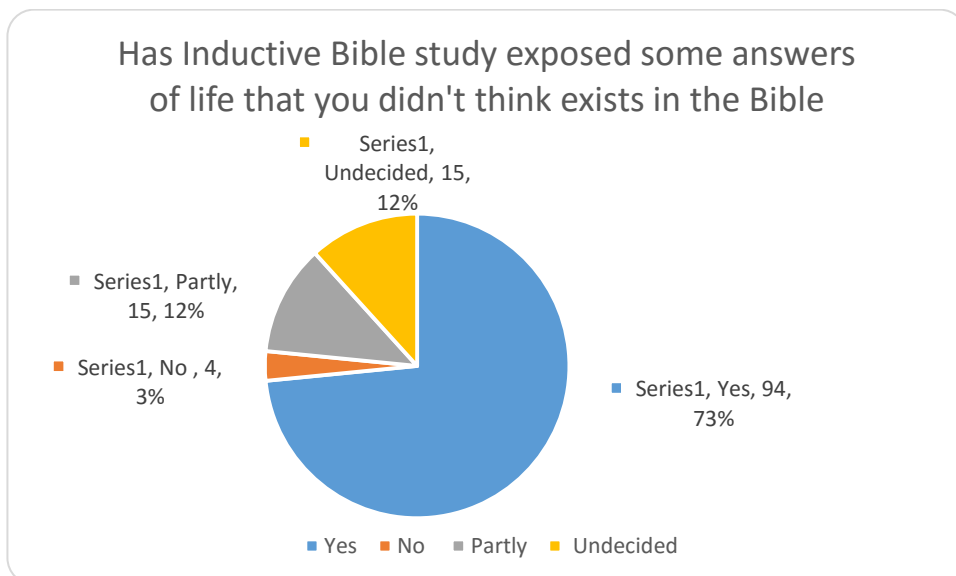


Fig. 3.15 shows result from the question Has Inductive Bible study exposed some answers of life that you didn't think exists in the Bible?

From results demonstrated in the pie chart above, 73% accepted Inductive Bible study has improved and exposed some answers of life that you didn't think exists in the Bible. 3% said it did not help to find such answers, 12 % said partly considered while the remaining 12 % were undecided.

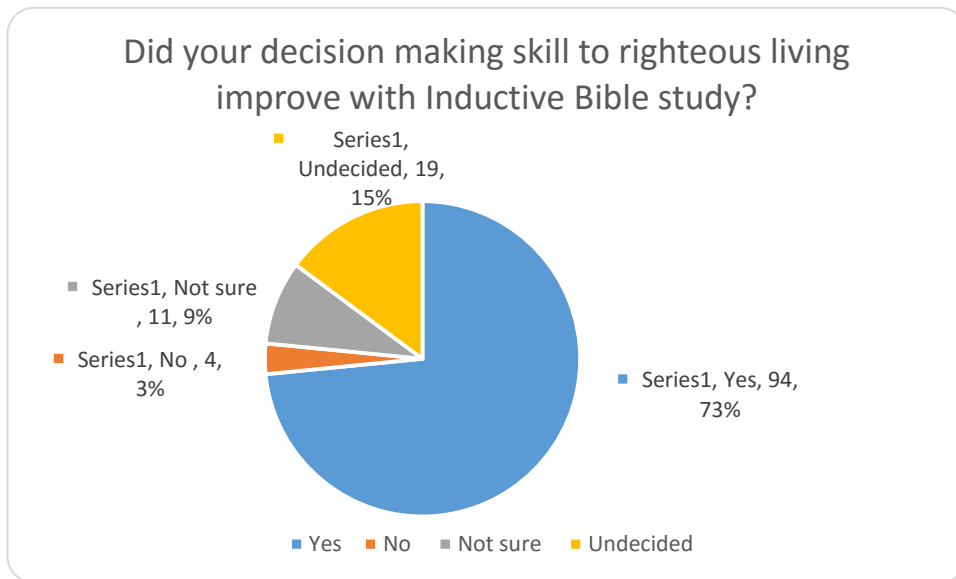


Fig. 3.16 shows the result from the question, did your decision making skill to righteous living improve with Inductive Bible study? The result as demonstrated in the above chart shows that 73% accepted that their decision making skill to righteous living improved with Inductive Bible study, 3% said decision making skill to righteous living did not improve with Inductive Bible study.9% were not sure if it improved or not and the remaining 15% were undecided.

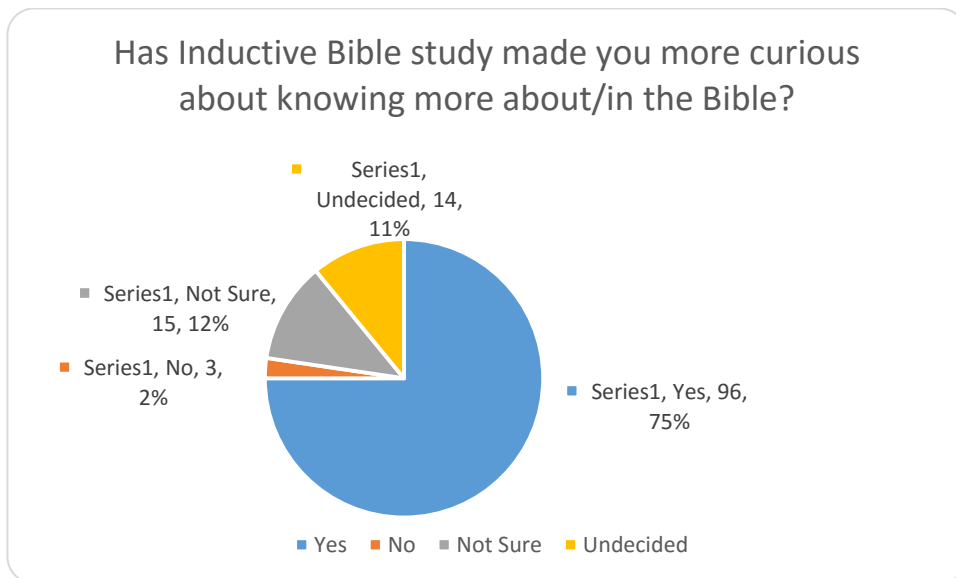


Fig. 3.17 shows results obtained from the question, has Inductive Bible study made the students more curious about knowing more about/in the Bible?

As seen above, 75% said Inductive Bible study made them more curious about knowing more about/in the Bible, 2% said Inductive Bible study did not make them more curious about knowing more about/in the Bible. 12% were not sure if Inductive Bible study has made them more curious about knowing more about/in the Bible.11% were undecided.

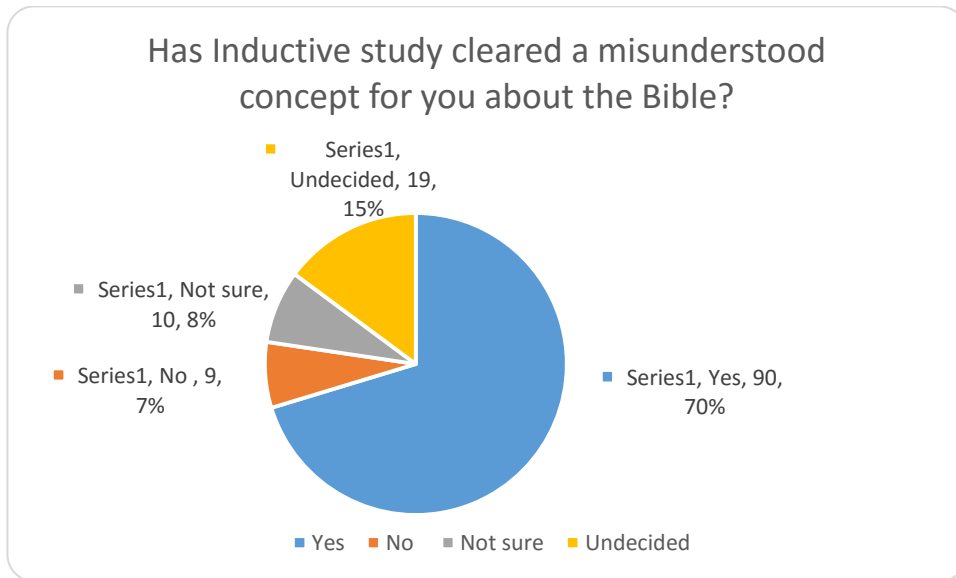


Fig. 3.18 shows results of the question has Inductive study cleared a misunderstood concept for you about the Bible?

From the research, 90% accepted that Inductive study cleared a misunderstood concept for them about the Bible. 7% said Inductive study did not clear a misunderstood concept for them about the Bible. While 8% were not sure, 15% were undecided about the question.

The principle of Inductive Bible study is based on scripture interprets scripture and thus, in the study of the scriptures, it is important to note that the bible has all elemental facts to defend what is being said. Scripture has answers for questions raised contextually, which is what is appreciated and encouraged in the method of the study of the scriptures called inductive bible study.

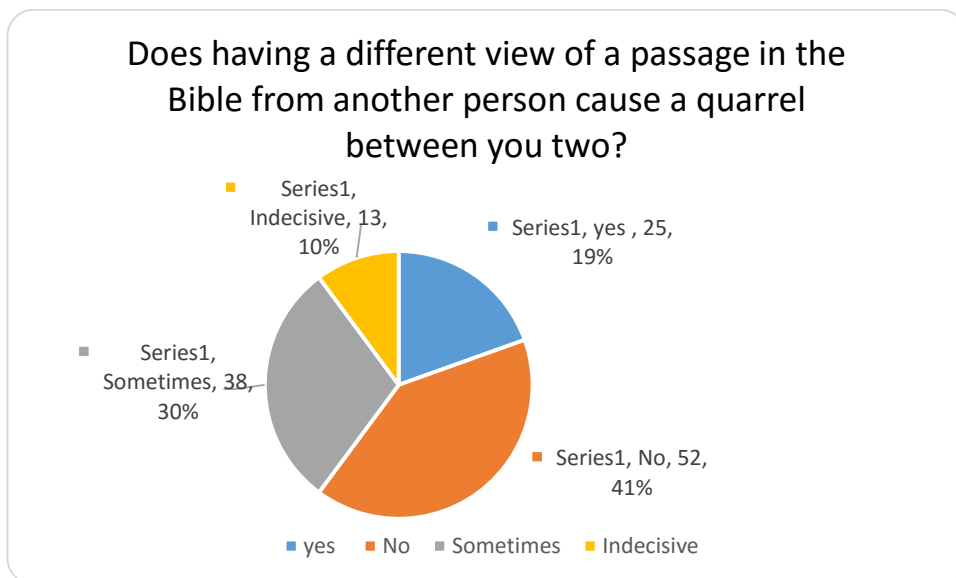


Fig.3.19 Shows results to the question does having a different view of a passage in the Bible from another person cause a quarrel between you two?

About 41 % accepted quarrels emanate as a result of having different understandings about the scripture. 30% said they do not quarrel on such occasions, while 10% said they sometimes have misunderstandings that lead to arguments and subsequently quarrels and 19% were indecisive about the question.

It is important to always verify all things heard or read pertaining to the scriptures, it is not worthy to argue destructively because arguments like this has led to a devastating relationship among many brethren, however constructive arguments and criticism in maturity with the aim of understanding and bringing a reconciliation of such disputes emanating from scriptures could be employed. It is clear from the epistle to Timothy “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed but rightly dividing the word of truth”.2. Timothy 2:15. (KJV)

This does not mean we should argue the scripture blindly, but to study to show ourselves worthy, rightly dividing the word of truth, being factual, truthful, extirpating our personal and self-originating doctrines and teachings, but making cases when and where due the right way.

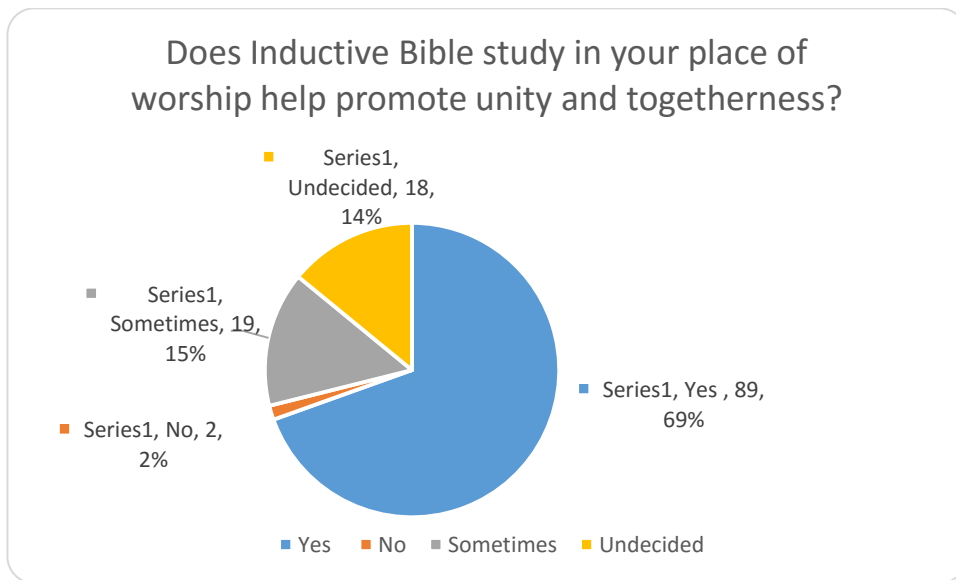


Fig. 3.20 Shows the result obtained from the question does Inductive Bible study in your place of worship help promote unity and togetherness?

This question had 69% accepting that the Inductive Bible study in their places of worship help promote unity and togetherness, while 2% said they did not think the inductive bible study promotes unity and togetherness 15% felt it promotes unity sometimes and 14 % were indecisive.

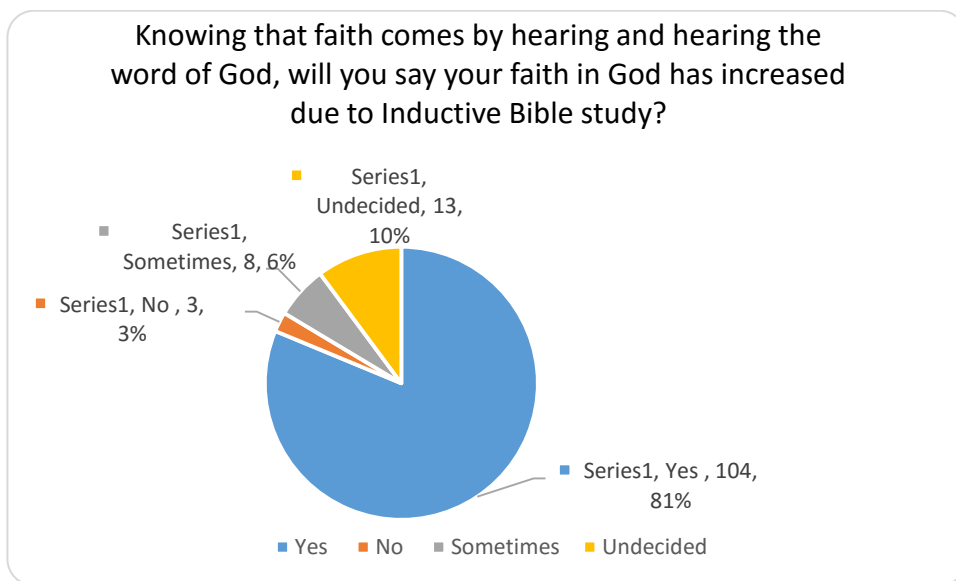


Fig. 3.21 Shows results for the question Knowing that faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God, will you say your faith in God has increased due to Inductive Bible study?

From the results obtained, 81% accepted that inductive Bible study was such an important tool to developing their faith, 3% said no, 6% said it helps sometimes, while the remaining 10% showed that they were undecided on the question.

### **CONCLUSION, FUTURE SCOPE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

From the study, it is evident that Inductive Bible study (IBS) although is quite used by many, a handful still have no understanding about it, it is used in Christian fellowships such as NIFES. It was observed that at least 58% of the students study their bibles at least once in a day, 37% twice or more a day and 5% do not study at all. At least 44% verify what they hear from bible discussions, about 34% have never heard of inductive Bible study, about 30% of those who had heard before heard in NIFES weekly fellowship meetings, 27% heard from special programmes organised by NIFES and 9% heard from their local churches. According to the results, 65% study their Bibles inductively, 87% affirmed they get inspiration from Inductive Bible study while 83% showed they had inspiration for righteousness, 80% said Inductive bible study has played important roles in their lives, 82% are very satisfied with this method of study, 80% accepts this method answers many doubting questions in their minds, 82% have spiritual benefits of the study and about 81% have had their faith increased as a result of inductive Bible studies.

Thus Inductive bible is seen from this study as an important tool for Christian efficacy as it is seen to have so much spiritual and physical benefits as illustrated from the study. However, Christians are encouraged to have a study of the bible using this tool of inductive bible study as it gives light to contextual meanings of each text and if applied appropriately, it is a tool to make the life of members of Christendom truly Christ-like as it is the desire of God Almighty for us all.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The study clearly shows that inductive bible study method is not used by many local churches, thus, making room for assumptions and revelations that are not consistent with the scriptures and causing more confusions than positive and contextual convictions.

It is therefore recommended that local churches should pick up the challenge of ensuring the bible is taught in such a way that conclusions are drawn from the scriptures after studying which is the inductive bible study and not drawing general conclusions and then looking for scriptures to defend such conclusions which are in most cases not seemly.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

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Our sincere gratitude goes to God the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for making it possible for us all to be alive and pen down this piece of Literature.

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